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THE NORTHWEST CIVIC FORUM  
3613 Cedardale Road  
Baltimore, Maryland 21215

May 2, 1968

The Honorable Spiro T. Agnew  
Governor - State of Maryland  
Executive Department  
Annapolis, Maryland 21404

Dear Governor Agnew:

While we were not officially solicited for suggestions as to how the breach between black ghetto residents and the white majority might be narrowed, we feel it incumbent upon us as citizens and as your constituents to make our feelings known. We have no panacea to propose as we feel that a situation that has been deteriorating for several hundred years cannot be rectified in one fell swoop. With this in mind, the following are some observations and suggestions that we consider pertinent:

1. First, conflicts are not resolved in the absence of communications. We think, for example, it highly unlikely that the Vietnam conflict will be resolved unless both sides communicate with each other. Likewise, we think your decision to avoid communicating with certain segments of the Negro population can only widen the gulf which separates you from them. We feel this is the case with any group, black or white, and we urge that - as the elected leader of all the people of Maryland - you should assure that your doors are always open to representatives of all points-of-view, no matter how divergent their attitudes may be from your own.

2. Second, we would urge that you assign top priority to the problems of the urban poor since these problems are clearly demanding of your immediate attention, and since nothing less than a massive effort is likely to result in their resolution. As a beginning, and with full recognition that this might be painful to you in view of current black sentiment, we would urge that you make as many personal appearances in the ghetto as possible. Certainly, your minority group

*Charlie Hunter*  
*This is a lecture to the Governor on how to conduct his office. The tone is patronizing & smug suggest a rather chilly but polite non-committal reply*  
*etc*

representative, Dr. Gilbert Ware, is highly competent, but we suggest that no assistant can adequately represent the Governor to the people. He must do this himself, perhaps at the risk of self-sacrifice. Only by doing so, we believe, will you be able to convince the inner-city poor of your commitment to their cause.

3. We recommend that you take immediate steps to get the State Personnel System in order as evidence of your good faith. Executive Directives are effective only to the extent that the Governor promotes them. If there is bias at the Department of Motor Vehicles, as the Commission on Interracial Problems and Relations clearly suggests, we urge you to visit that agency and let administrative and supervisory personnel know - in no uncertain terms - that you want the situation corrected promptly. We urge that you support the granting of enforcement powers to the Interracial Commission and that you make a public demonstration of your support of that body and of its Executive Director, Mr. George James.
4. We urge an extension of Maryland's Consumer Protection Services and the location of field offices for this service among the persons victimized most - ghetto residents. We urge that you sponsor and push legislation in this field and use of all of the power of your office to have such legislation passed and enforced. We further urge extensive efforts to strengthen Open-Housing Legislation and a statewide effort to construct low-cost housing and to help the poor obtain mortgages.
5. We urge a reassessment of the concept of "leadership". We suggest that elected officials take their cases and their causes to the people as they are prone to do during their campaigns. Certainly, meetings and conferences with "leaders" are beneficial, but these communication channels must be supplemented and buttressed by face-to-face contacts with those persons who will be most affected by your actions in their behalf or, conversely, to their detriment.
6. We recommend that every possible amount of State aid be made available to Baltimore City. This is where your problems are, and this is where they are likely to continue to be without action and support from Annapolis.



We are sure you would agree that far less than the maximum effort has ensued from the State level, and we urge you to insure that each of your two hundred Department Heads, no matter how remote his relationship is with the inner city, makes a commitment to take some positive action to relieve the stress, tension and discontent which prevails among the urban poor. Such action could take the form of employing ghetto residents, increasing services to the city's core or helping to protect the rights of the impoverished and uninformed.

7. We recommend the establishment of an Inter-Agency Committee on the Problems of the Urban Poor to be made up of key personnel from major departments of State Government. This committee would report directly to you and would be charged with the responsibility for broad-based planning and programming designed to relieve the plight of the urban poor by state action.
8. We recommend that the State develop and support a program of ombudsmen to act as liaison persons between the poor and State, and municipal agencies. Grants should be made to appropriate private groups, such as our own, to select and employ the ombudsmen in order that they not be direct employees of the state and convey to the poor the impression that they are controlled by the government. The ombudsmen should meet requirements established by an Advisory Committee made up equally of representatives of state agencies and citizens of the state, particularly the poor.
9. We recommend that the State supplement certain federal programs whose effectiveness could be considerably enhanced with a minimum of increased financial input. We think of state subsidization of community aides to follow-up on missed appointments in health programs; we make reference to supplementing transportation allowances in more training and employment programs; and we think of providing petty cash funds to be used for a variety of purposes in a number of projects designed to aid the poor.
10. We recommend the establishment of a Talent Bank aimed primarily at placing qualified Negroes in employment situations which they might not otherwise be able to enter. We are thinking of the financial establishment; policy-making positions in industry and commerce; executive positions in health administration, etc.

In this way, there would be a visible demonstration to the undereducated of the advantages of obtaining good higher education and training. Youths would have more to aspire to than government employment and lower echelon positions in the private sector.

11. Finally, we recommend a spiritual commitment on your part and on the part of your assistants, advisors and consultants to the "rightness" of providing equal rights, equal protection and equal opportunities to all. You must approach this with zeal and conviction and, to make your point clear, it may be incumbent upon you to "over-equalize" initially in order to regain the confidence of this large sector of your constituency.

We sincerely hope that our suggestions will be helpful to you and we invite you to come to one of our Monday evening meetings to discuss our recommendation and further explore our point-of-view. Should you find it possible to meet with us, please contact our Program Chairman, William G. Sykes at 542-1653 (residence), or Plaza 2-2000, extension 663 (work). Should there be any service that we could provide within the realm of our convictions and principles, to assist in the creation of a colloquy between exponents of varying points of view in the community, we would be more than happy to do so. We are distributing copies of this letter to the press and to key public officials in the hope that others in the broad community will be motivated to inject their ideas into the attempt to resurrect a spirit of cooperation and to develop realistic approaches to the problem of primary concern to us all.

Sincerely,

*Wendell Wright*

Wendell Wright  
President  
THE NORTHWEST CIVIC FORUM

Mr. Wendell Wright, President  
The Northwest Civic Forum  
3616 Cedardale Road  
Baltimore, Maryland 21215

Dear Mr. Wright:

Thank you for your letter of May 2, 1968 and the suggestions  
and observations that you consider pertinent.

In order that you may be fully aware <sup>(of my views and efforts in civil right matters,</sup> I would like to offer the  
following:

1. My doors are always open to representatives of all  
points of view, no matter how divergent their attitude,  
so long as they <sup>operate within the framework of our laws</sup> ~~represent and respect law and order.~~
2. This Administration has assigned a top priority to the  
problems of all <sup>of</sup> the poor and will continue to do so within  
the limits of the State's ability <sup>/ to meet these needs</sup> ~~to meet these needs~~
3. My appearances in all segments of the community have  
<sup>vastly increased</sup> necessarily been limited by the demands of this office and  
the complexities and problems of government.
4. Enclosed for your information is the Governor's Code of  
Fair Practices promulgated by my Administration. If there  
is bias in any department of State Government, it will be  
~~treated~~ <sup>overcome</sup> within the existing framework of State Law. The  
Attorney General has been so instructed.
5. The Attorney General's Consumer Protection Office has been  
upgraded and expanded. My directions to the Attorney General  
have been explicit in that all possible stress be given to the

problems of the inner-city residents. ~~Furthermore, you~~  
~~are probably now aware that~~ My Administration sponsored  
legislation to provide low-cost housing and a Mortgage Finance  
Authority, <sup>which the Legislature unfortunately</sup> ~~The Legislature, despite my entreaties,~~ did not  
see fit to pass ~~these measures~~. However, the Legislative  
Council has been instructed to re-examine these proposals, and  
<sup>I hope they will be passed at</sup> ~~in hopes of passage during~~ the next legislative session.

6. My Administration has provided the most massive grants-in-aid program to the City of Baltimore in the history of State Government. In addition, we have given the City the ability to rely on other sources of income other than the property tax. We have also endeavored to aid the City in all possible ways in the development of job training, a model cities program, expanded educational benefits and grants for public safety.
7. Your recommendation of an Inter-Agency Committee on the Problems of the Urban Poor should come under the Model Cities Program which Baltimore has undertaken, <sup>and therefore</sup> ~~is primarily a City government responsibility~~ <sup>is</sup>
8. Legislation has been passed that will allow local ombudsmen.
9. The State has continually supplemented Federal programs and, in fact, gone beyond these programs by committing pay-as-you-go funds and emergency appropriations <sup>to such programs as</sup> ~~to~~ Medicaid, O.I.C. and job training programs.



Mr. Wendell Wright

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Date

10. The State and the Department of Employment Security

have constantly worked in all areas to develop qualified  
Negroes and assure that jobs are available.

11. All members of my staff are aware and share <sup>or</sup> ~~with me~~ my *personal*  
commitment to equal rights, equal protection, equal op-  
portunities and the preservation of law and order within our  
society.

While it is not possible for me to attend your Monday evening  
meetings, I will be pleased to assign any of my Program Executives,  
Department Heads, or personal staff to meet with you and the Northwest  
Civic Forum to discuss any of the above points or to clarify any of the  
aforementioned programs.

Sincerely,

STA

Note: Enclosure of Governor's Code of Fair Practices

Sylvia - Pls type Mr Gov's Signature;  
~~after discussion~~ with class Breaker before  
forwarding HHT

Dear Mr. Wright:

Thank you for your letter of May 2, and the suggestions and observations you make relative to my relations with the Negro community and the solution of present pressing problems.

It is obvious to me that ~~xxxx~~ you are not fully aware of actions ~~xx~~ I have already taken in ~~this~~ this field or of my continued commitment to the principle of equal rights for all of our citizens.

In answer to the specific points you raise, I submit the following for the information of your organization: ~~xxxx~~

~~xx~~ My doors are ~~always~~ open to representatives of all points of view, no matter how divergent their attitude, as long as they operate within the framework of the law. I have followed this practice since becoming Governor, and I continue to do so. So there is no absence of communication. *Cite to me examples if you have information to the contrary.*

~~xx~~ I have assigned a top priority in this Administration to problems of the urban poor, as may be witnessed by the virtual depletion of the State's emergency fund last year to establish and finance a jobs program for the benefit of Baltimore City, ~~and the~~ ~~xxxxxx~~  
~~continued~~



to salvage the Federal Government's abandonment of "Operation Champ,"  
and productive  
to meet the deficit of the very worthy/O.I.C. programs, and in  
numerous other areas. We also are hard at work on new job opportunity  
and training programs which will be announced shortly.

As for job ~~ex~~ opportunities in the State government, I think  
the "Governor's Code of Fair Practices" that I promulgated last  
December speaks for itself, and I enclose a copy for your edification.

I am committed totally to its enforcement. I have found on personal  
investigation ~~investigation~~ that the ~~the~~ D.M.V. situation ~~has been~~ grossly  
~~has been~~ exaggerated by representatives of the State ~~Interracial Commission,~~

~~Interracial Commission,~~  
exaggerated by representatives of the State ~~Interracial Commission,~~

~~are~~ primarily through faulty and slipshod investigative methods which  
I ~~intend~~ intend to correct.

I believe you also will find that this Administration <sup>alone</sup> in its first year  
made more appointments of Negroes to high and sensitive posts than  
~~any~~ any other in Maryland's history for an entire term, and this pace  
continues today.

In aid to Baltimore City, this Administration also has  
exceeded the efforts of any other in Maryland history, and I was  
perfectly willing to face the ~~weight~~ <sup>displeasure</sup> of taxpayers to accomplish this.  
Baltimore's participation in the Federal Model Cities Program,  
actively supported by this State Administration, also will do much  
to assist the City in its financial problems.

*Civil Rights*

May 9, 1968

Mr. Wendell Wright  
President  
The Northwest Civic Forum  
3616 Cedardale Road  
Baltimore, Maryland 21215

MAY 22 1968

Dear Mr. Wright:

Thank you for your letter of May 2, and the suggestions and observations you make relative to my relations with the Negro community and the solution of present pressing problems.

It is obvious to me that you are not fully aware of actions I have already taken in this field or of my continued commitment to the principle of equal rights for all of our citizens.

In answer to the specific points you raise, I submit the following for the information of your organization:

My doors are open to representatives of all points of view, no matter how divergent their attitude, as long as they operate within the framework of the law. I have followed this practice since becoming Governor, and I continue to do so. So there is no absence of communication. Cite to me examples if you have information to the contrary.

I have assigned a top priority in this Administration to problems of the urban poor, as may be witnessed by the virtual depletion of the State's emergency fund last year to establish and finance a jobs program for the benefit of Baltimore City, to salvage the Federal Government's abandonment of "Operation Champ," to meet the deficit of the very worthy and productive D.I.C. Program, and in numerous other areas. We also are hard at work on new job opportunity and training programs which will be announced shortly.

As for job opportunities in the State government, I think the "Governor's Code of Fair Practices" that I promulgated last December speaks for itself, and I enclose a copy for your edification.

Mr. Wendell Wright

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May 9, 1968

I am committed totally to its enforcement. I have found on personal investigation that the D. M. V. situation has been grossly exaggerated by representatives of the State Interracial Commission, primarily through faulty and slipshod investigative methods which I intend to correct.

I believe you also will find that this Administration, in its first year, alone, made more appointments of Negroes to high and sensitive posts than any other in Maryland's history for an entire term, and this pace continues today.

In aid to Baltimore City, this Administration also has exceeded the efforts of any other in Maryland history, and I was perfectly willing to face the displeasure of taxpayers to accomplish this. Baltimore's participation in the Federal Model Cities Program, actively supported by this State Administration, also will do much to assist the City in its financial problems.

As for your suggestion that I make personal appearances in ghettos to dramatize my concern, I can only tell you that I regard such actions as "showboating" in the most vulgar connotation of the word and I feel that they accomplish little. I would much prefer through deeds to register my commitment, and if these actions fail to show concern, so be it. I should not have to tell you that the demands on this office have increased dramatically within the last few years and that my personal appearances, in all segments of the community and the State, are severely limited. I necessarily must be represented by others, but at least my personal representative at most Negro affairs is a Negro, which in itself is a first for a Maryland governor.

Finally, I thank you again for your thoughtful letter and your efforts to help. Please be assured that I, and all members of my staff, are dedicated to the removal of bias and discrimination in our society, whatever the grounds, and to the economic improvement and well being of all of our citizens.

Sincerely,

Sta/HLT/sk